

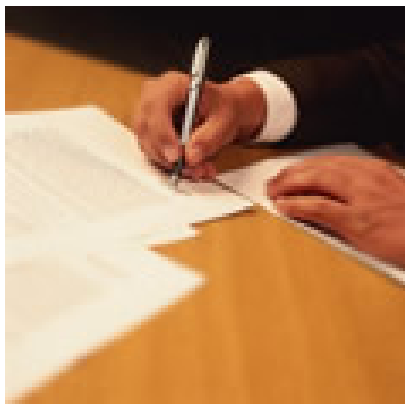


Consumer Alert

FORMAL TELEPHONE COMPLAINTS

How to Resolve a Telephone Dispute

You object to a telephone company's action that results in you working with working with the company to resolve the problem. However, you disagree with the company's opinion. You appeal the company's decision to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) staff, but you are not happy with the answer you get. What can you do now?



File a Formal Complaint

To file a formal complaint, a customer must prepare a letter, or complaint, explaining the problem. Mail the original complaint and 7 copies to the MPSC at the address noted on the back of this sheet.

The written complaint must include:

- the customer's name, address, telephone number where MPSC staff may contact the customer between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and the customer's signature;
- the name and address of the company with which the customer is having the problem;
- the address of the location where the dispute/problem took place and the name and telephone number on the account;
- the time during which the act(s) involved in the problem took place (chronology of events), including months and days, as accurately as possible;
- a description of what happened, the names and addresses of persons involved, and the amount(s) of money, if any, in question; and
- a statement of what the customer wants done about the manner.

It is important to be as detailed and accurate as possible.



Pursue an Alternative Solution

If the complaint amount is \$1,000 or less, the customer and company representative should discuss other ways of resolving the problem. The problem must be settled in 20 days or the matter will be sent to mediation.

Next Action

The mediator, a person selected by the MPSC, conducts the mediation, which may last up to 25 days. Mediation may include a review of the complaint and discussions with the customer and company. If in this process the customer and company are still unable to agree, the mediator will issue a recommended solution. The customer and company have seven days to either accept or reject the recommendation. If the customer or company rejects the solution, the complaint proceeds to a formal hearing.

Hearing Process

An administrative law judge conducts hearings on complaints in a trial-like proceeding. The customer and company participate in the hearing. The MPSC staff may also participate. Lawyers will always represent the company. The customer may hire a lawyer, represent him/herself (excluding incorporated businesses), or bring anyone the customer wants to help. The customer must present information and witnesses, etc. to prove or justify his/her position.

After the hearing, the judge will issue a proposed decision. The Commission always makes the final decision, and it will issue its decision in an MPSC order.

During this process the customer and the company may continue to try to settle the problem. However, the MPSC must approve any agreement that is reached.

Required Costs

A party who rejects the mediator's decision, and ultimately receives an unfavorable MPSC order, will be responsible for the costs of the other party related to pursuing the complaint. However, if both the customer and the company reject the mediator's decision, each party will pay their own hearing costs.

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